



# A CUP OF HEALTH WITH CDC

## Stopping Strokes

World Stroke Day — October 29, 2016

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*[Announcer] This program is presented by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.*

[Dr. Gaynes] Welcome to *A Cup of Health with CDC*, a weekly feature of the *MMWR*, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. I'm your host, Dr. Robert Gaynes.

Stroke is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. Recognizing the symptoms and getting immediate treatment can decrease the chance of permanent disability and even death.

Dr. Jennifer Foltz is a researcher with CDC's National Center for Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion. She's joining us today to discuss the importance of getting immediate treatment for a stroke. Welcome to the show, Jennifer

[Dr. Foltz] Thank you, Bob.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jennifer, let's start with what is a stroke?

[Dr. Foltz] Stroke is sometimes called a brain attack. It occurs when the blood supply to the brain is blocked by a clot or when a blood vessel in the brain ruptures.

[Dr. Gaynes] How many people suffer a stroke each year?

[Dr. Foltz] Well Bob, nearly one million Americans experience a stroke each year. Moreover, someone dies from a stroke once every four minutes. Also, a stroke is the number one cause of serious, long-term disability. Over half of stroke survivors, or over 400,000 people per year, have decreased mobility. Stroke can also affect things like your memories, your emotions and language, and many functions of the body, like breathing and digestion.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jennifer, what are the leading symptoms that someone is experiencing a stroke?

[Dr. Foltz] There is an acronym to help remember the signs and symptoms of stroke. It is FAST, or F-A-S-T. The F stands for FACE. Ask the person to smile and look to see if they're having signs of facial drooping. For A, A stands for ARMS. Have the person raise both arms and look to see if they're able to move together or if one arm drifts downward. The S is for SPEECH. Here, you can ask the person to repeat a phrase and see if their speech is slurred or sounds strange. And lastly, the T stands for TIME. If you see any of these symptoms, it's important to call 9-1-1 right away to get the person to life saving treatment as soon as possible.

[Dr. Gaynes] Why is it so important to get someone who is experiencing symptoms of a stroke to medical care quickly?

[Dr. Foltz] The chance of survival and recovery is higher if treatment is provided right away. Time lost is brain lost, therefore, act fast because every single minute counts.

[Dr. Gaynes] How can we decrease our chance of ever having a stroke?

[Dr. Foltz] In many cases, stroke is preventable by modifying lifestyle behaviors or managing medical conditions. Remember the ABCs... A is for ASPIRIN, B for BLOOD PRESSURE MEDICINES, and C for CHOLESTEROL CONTROL MEDICINES, if prescribed to you by your doctor. S is for STOPPING SMOKING. In addition, reduce your risk by getting plenty of exercise on a regular basis, losing excess weight, limiting alcohol and added sugars, and eating a healthy, low sodium diet with plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables.

[Dr. Gaynes] Jennifer, where can listeners get more information about stroke?

[Dr. Foltz] Listeners can go to [cdc.gov/stroke](http://cdc.gov/stroke).

[Dr. Gaynes] Thanks, Jennifer. I've been talking today with CDC's Dr. Jennifer Foltz about stroke. Remember, the symptoms of stroke include face drooping, arm weakness, and speech difficulty. If you or someone you know experience these symptoms, call 9-1-1 to get help immediately.

Until next time, be well. This is Dr. Robert Gaynes for *A Cup of Health with CDC*.

[Announcer] For the most accurate health information, visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) or call 1-800-CDC-INFO.